

University of Houston
M.D. Degree Approval
UH College of Medicine (UH CoM)
FAQs

NEED

1. Why is another medical school needed in Texas and, specifically, why in Houston?

- a) The Houston area has grown by 4 million people since the last medical school was established in 1972
- b) Texas ranks 47th out of 50 states in primary care physician to population ratio
- c) Projected need is 6,260 additional primary care physicians in Texas by 2030 to keep up with population growth
- d) “Although there are several other medical schools in the state and 2 in the region, these schools are not producing enough primary care physicians to address this shortfall.” – *THECB doctoral site visit report*

2. Why not invest the time, effort and funds dedicated on a proposed medical school toward other existing programs that could lift the university?

- a) “The proposed M.D. program has the potential to be nationally recognized for its focus and commitment to educate a diverse group of graduates to be primary care physicians with a clear understanding of health disparities.” – THECB doctoral site visit report
- b) The UH and Houston community is energized in support of this project because of its uniqueness and clearly defined mission to solve what is a universally understood problem of a lack of primary care physicians in the state
- c) There is clear and convincing evidence, based upon data obtained from other similarly designed colleges of medicine, that the UH CoM will be a catalyst to lift the research capabilities of many of the existing research centers/activities within the university
- d) The University of Houston will continue investing its time and effort to improve its existing colleges and programs
- e) UH has been one of the most aggressive recruiters of National Academy members over the past years, having hired 18 National Academy faculty in the past 10 years and taking advantage of the Governors University Research

Initiative (GURI) to hire three National Academy members since its establishment

3. Why approve an additional medical school if it will further dilute the funding available to other medical schools?

a) It is the mission of Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to ensure that a new program “is needed by the state and the local community and does not unnecessarily duplicate programs offered by other institutions” with no consideration from the THECB as to if the funding will be provided by the Texas Legislature.

b) 6,260 additional primary care physicians are needed in Texas by 2030 to keep up with population growth. Clearly, there is a need for this program.

c) Approval of any new program by the THECB further dilutes the funding for all other academic programs throughout the state, so following that logic, no new academic programs should be approved by the THECB

4. Why create an allopathic medical school rather than an osteopathic medical school, when there is evidence that D.O.'s tend to practice in primary care at higher rates than M.D.s?

a) An M.D. medical is a much better fit for a Tier One research university as M.D. medical schools tend to be significantly more research-oriented than osteopathic medical schools

b) We plan to produce 50% of graduates choosing primary care specialties which is similar to osteopathic medical schools

5. How will UH CoM address the clear need to treat mental health issues in our state?

a) Clearly, we are facing a mental health crisis, and it is the mission of the UH CoM to train its graduates to be the first line of treatment in this crisis

b) All UH CoM students will be receive extensive training in behavioral and mental health, with training in how to identify and treat patients with behavioral and mental health issues

c) This training will be directed through the Department of Behavioral Health and Social Sciences, which is one of four departments within the UH CoM, and fairly unique to medical schools

6. How does UH aim to address rural health needs with UH CoM?

a) All UH CoM students will spend at least one month in a rural rotation during their third or fourth year at UH CoM in order to expose them to the practice of rural health care

b) UH CoM will seek to recruit students from rural areas, whom are most likely to return to rural areas to practice after graduation

c) UH CoM will seek to build upon its existing residency agreements in order to create rural residency opportunities for its students

7. Telehealth/telemedicine is increasingly the future of how health care will be delivered to patients. What does UH CoM plan to do to educate students in this technology?

a) Students will be introduced to telehealth/telemedicine real-time in the actual care of clinical patients

MISSION AND DISTINCTION

8. How is this M.D. different from other medical schools in the state and region?

a) UH seeks to establish a College of Medicine focused on preparing primary care doctors to practice in underserved urban and rural communities and building on interdisciplinary health research already underway at the University

b) Existing medical schools in the state and Houston region graduate medical students who are practicing in primary care consistently at a rate of less than 20%

c) Modeled after other similarly designed medical schools who have similar rates of success (Florida State University, Florida International University, Illinois State University), at least 50% of UH CoM graduates will practice in primary care

9. How can you ensure that students who attend UH CoM will practice in primary care disciplines?

a) UH CoM will employ a holistic approach to recruiting its students, looking for students who, statistically, are more inclined to practice in primary care (older students, students with a history of public service or parents in public service)

b) UH CoM will also employ an innovative curriculum that consistently and longitudinally exposes students to primary care settings and practice over the whole of the four years at UH CoM

c) For instance, UH CoM students will work in inter-professional teams with other medical related students (nursing, pharmacy, optometry, social work) at the University to provide long-term, ongoing assessment of social determinants of health, psychosocial support and connection to medical, social and legal resources with an assigned family in an underserved neighborhood adjacent to the University, with monthly home visits over the 4 year medical school curriculum

d) "It is the consensus of the site visit team that the proposed program, when fully implemented, will help to increase the number of physicians who will choose to practice in Texas, with a significant percentage committed to careers in primary care." – THECB doctoral site visit

10. How do you guarantee there will be no "mission creep" in subsequent years?

a) UH CoM will recruit faculty members who are passionate about the mission of training primary care physicians to practice in underserved communities in Texas

b) UH CoM will build a culture that is strongly supportive of primary care specialty choice by its graduates

c) UH CoM's founding dean is a primary care physician, and future deans appointed should be primary care physicians

d) The research focus of the UH CoM will be on improving health and healthcare, and not curing disease

11. How do you propose to recruit and educate a diverse population when other schools aimed to do the same, but have failed to do it?

a) UH is traditionally one of the most diverse universities in the country. It is a majority minority university, and is the second most diverse research university in the country and will build upon this tradition of diversity with UH CoM

b) UH CoM has already begun to create pipeline programs within the City of Houston to start recruiting and educate a diverse student body about the opportunity to become a primary physician at UH while students are in middle school, rather than waiting until they are preparing to obtain their undergraduate degree

c) "The proposed MD program has the potential to be nationally recognized for its focus and commitment to educate a diverse group of graduates to be primary care physicians with a clear understanding of health disparities, and with an increased likelihood of choosing to practice in underserved areas in Texas." – *THECB doctoral site visit*

12. What will be the cost per to your students to attend? How does that compare to other medical schools?

a) Our current estimate for tuition and fees for medical students is approximately \$22,000 per year for in-state students, which is consistent with the other state-funded allopathic medical schools in Texas, and at the lowest end of the spectrum for in-state tuition for medical schools around the country

13. What evidence is there that the type of student that UH aims to recruit actually exists?

- a) There are large numbers of applicants to Texas medical school with only 30% achieving admissions
- b) There are large numbers of pre-medical students at UH from very diverse backgrounds
- c) Other medical schools have been successful with primary care training missions

14. Would you consider opening a physician's assistant (PA) program in addition to this program?

- a) Yes, in the future, once our medical school is firmly established

15. What was the opinion of the THECB doctoral site visit team?

- a) "Our general response to the information presented regarding the readiness of the institution to move forward with their proposed program, is very positive and supportive. We quickly grew to have confidence in Dr. Spann's leadership and those he has hired to work with him. As a result, while many details have yet to be worked out, we have no doubt that this will be an excellent medical education institution that will prepare competent physicians to meet the healthcare needs of the citizens of Texas." – THECB doctoral site visit report

RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABILITY

16. How much will the new residencies created by Healthcare Corporation of American (HCA) cost the state?

- a) Nothing
- b) HCA will completely fund the full cost of all 389 residency slots in the agreement signed with UH
- c) At approximately \$150,000 per resident per year for five years, this is an estimated investment of \$230 million to further the health of Texans by HCA at no cost to the taxpayers over ten years
- d) After 5 years of operation of each new residency, federal requirements will be met by HCA in order to receive federal (CMS) funding for the ongoing cost of these residency slots

17. Where will UH CoM be located and from what funds will you pay for it?

- a) While there are multiple sites that have been considered for location, it is most likely that the permanent building will be located on the University of Houston campus in or near the existing UH Health District, close to Health

Building 1 and Health Building 2, which house other UH health-related programs.

18. What other current programs at the University will help support the creation of the school?

a) UH is a comprehensive university with existing health and health related professional professions, colleges and programs at the undergraduate, graduate and doctorate level, in addition to many other colleges and programs with will contribute to the mission of UH CoM

b) UH has many high achieving undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programs in health disciplines such as nursing, optometry, pharmacy, social work and psychology

c) UH has other high achieving programs in health related disciplines such as biology, chemistry and other biomedical sciences

d) The Houston Premedical Academy at the University of Houston Honors College, a partnership with the Michael E. DeBakey High School for Health Professions and Baylor College of Medicine, graduates 90 students every year, with up to 10 conditionally guaranteed slots at Baylor College of Medicine.

19. How many faculty will UH need to hire to support the creation of the CoM? How does it propose to do that between now and 2020?

a) At full staffing, the UH CoM will have 65 fulltime faculty teaching on campus plus a large number of community based faculty teaching in the outpatient and inpatient clinical settings. We will recruit at a national level according to UH faculty hiring policies, seeking to recruit a diverse and highly qualified faculty. Our progress to date shows our ability to be successful

20. How will you ensure that the cost is affordable to students so that they can choose to practice in areas despite the costs to attend?

a) Already, a generous donor has contributed \$3 million to cover the four-year cost of tuition and fees for the inaugural cohort of 30 students

b) We continue to have discussions with other donors to fund similar gifts that would significantly reduce the cost for our students to attend UH CoM through scholarships

c) Scholarships will come primarily from the private sector, and the College of Medicine has employed a full-time Sr. Director of Advancement, as well as a UH Chief Development Officer for Health, to lead the efforts to raise funds for this purpose

21. Why is the yearly budget so small compared to that of other schools?

- a) By locating UH CoM on the existing UH campus, we avoid much of the start-up costs associated with constructing and maintain a building on a new campus by utilizing the existing administrative functions that already exist on the campus
- b) UH CoM will leverage the existing academic resources at the University of Houston, granting joint appointments for many teaching positions that would otherwise have been new hires at other medical schools
- c) UH CoM is not creating a health science center, but rather, and simply, a College of Medicine that does its work in community clinics rather in a large hospital setting, which is in line with the mission of the CoM

22. How much money have you raised and how much is still needed?

- a) To date, \$35 million has been raised in support of the UH CoM, with a stated goal of raising at least \$40 million before the end of the Texas Legislative session
- b) This fall, we announced a \$15 million gift from Humana Healthcare as part of the total raised so far. Several other gifts were announced as well
- c) We expect that we will be able to continue raising significant funds towards this project as we are able to receive approval from the THECB and the Legislature

23. Your plan calls for an additional \$20 million appropriation from the Texas Legislature during the next session. How do you make your budget work if you are not able to obtain that funding?

- a) We are very confident that we will receive \$20 million in special item funding requested during the legislative session, having received commitments of support for this item from much of the Texas legislature
- b) Nevertheless, if we are not able to attain the funds from the legislature, we will certainly have to adjust our fundraising strategy to obtain the startup funds in order to open for the first cohort of students as scheduled

24. What other funds will you be relying on from the Texas Legislature?

- a) As is the case with all other current state medical schools, UH CoM will seek to obtain formula funding beginning in 2021

25. How do you ensure that UH CoM will not be a financial drain on other functions of the university?

- a) The University has created a financial firewall that prevents other university funds from being diverted for the use of the UH CoM

26. What hires have you already made to support UH CoM?

- a) Three Associate Deans have already been hired (Medical Education, Student Affairs/Admissions/Outreach, Community Health) as well as three Department Chairs (Clinical Sciences, Biomedical Sciences, Health Systems and Population Health Sciences) in an effort to continue working towards filing of the necessary accreditation application and ultimately being ready to welcome the first cohort on schedule
- b) Currently recruiting Chair of Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences
- c) Will soon be recruitment for Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education/Faculty Development/Faculty Affairs, as well as one faculty member for each of the four departments to be on-boarded by January 2019

GME and Partnerships

27. The Texas Legislature has mandated that we address creating residencies rather than creating more medical schools, how have you addressed this mandate?

- a) UH has signed an MOU with Healthcare Corporation of American (HCA) to create 142 first-year residency positions by 2022 and create 389 total new residencies by 2025
- b) This plan more than adequately meets the requirements of both SB 1022 and HCR 102, which require that an any institution proposing an M.D. degree to provide a “specific plan regarding the addition of first year residency positions”, that the plan must propose an increase in the total number of first-year residency positions in the state sufficient to reasonably accommodate theirs and other medical schools’ projected graduates, and that the Legislature supports prioritizing funding for graduate medical education in aiming to achieve 1.1 to 1 ratio of GME slots to medical school graduates.
- c) The agreement with HCA exceeds the 1.1 to 1 requirement by establishing 20 more first-year residency slots than the full cohort of medical students that will graduate from UH CoM in 2028.
- d) The agreement with HCA will help to substantially alleviate the growing need for GME slots in the coming years as HCA has committed to creating 142 first-year residency slots by 2022, six years prior to the first class of 120 UH CoM medical school students graduate in 2028
- e) “There is clear evidence that the program will address an unmet need for primary care physicians who choose to practice in underserved areas, including the Houston area.” – THECB doctoral site visit report

28. What rotational agreements have been created for 3rd and 4th year students? What are the distances from the UH campus?

a) UH has a signed MOU with HCA Healthcare-Gulf Coast Division to develop a UH-HCA GME consortium to establish 6 new residency programs with 142 new first year residency positions and ultimately 389 new total residency positions, as well as to train our third and fourth year medical students in 5 of their area hospitals:

- Clear Lake Regional (21 miles)
- Bayshore (13 miles)
- Kingwood (26 miles)
- West Houston (18 miles)
- North Cypress (27 miles)

b) UH has a signed MOU with St. Joseph Medical Center to train our third and fourth year medical students (3 miles)

c) UH has a signed MOU with M.D. Anderson Cancer Center to provide elective rotations in cancer-related specialties to our 4th year medical students (4 miles)

29. How many faculty will UH need to hire to support the creation of the CoM? How does it propose to do that between now and 2020?

a) At full staffing, UH CoM will have 65 fulltime faculty teaching on campus plus a large number of community based faculty teaching in the outpatient and inpatient clinical settings. We will recruit at a national level according to UH faculty hiring policies, seeking to recruit a diverse and highly qualified faculty. Our progress to date shows our ability to be successful

30. What support do you have from hospital systems/health providers in the Houston area?

a) In addition to the MOUs outlined above, UH has signed MOUs with the Harris Health System as well as 4 FQHCs and one safety net charity clinic (San Jose), as well as commitments from 2 other FQHCs

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